

"If we could only realize it, this is our most potential hour for the interpretation of Christ and His cross to an awakened world."—D. C. Lilly.

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THE UNION SEMINARY REVIEW

Vol. XLI.

JULY, 1930.

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THE COMING CREATIVE PERIOD.

*Address to the Graduating Class of Union Theological
Seminary, Richmond, Va., May 7, 1930.*

BY REV. D. CLAY LILLY, D. D.,
Pastor Reynolda Presbyterian Church, Reynolda, N. C.

[The following notable address is a challenge to our whole Church, and indeed to Christian men and women everywhere, to think, and to think deeply and seriously. The important matter of the next fifty years, says Dr. Lilly, will be to re-state our fundamentals of religion. For this "we will need scholars, we will need thinkers, we will need prophets, we will need apostles, we will need martyrs".]

Many thinking people are saying that we are at the end of an era. Many more are talking confidently of a new era which we are about to enter. Rev. Dr. George W. Truett, in a recent address to a great company of young people, said, "I would rather be living during the next fifty years than to have lived any five hundred years of the past." To this agree many prophets of our day. Dr. Walter W. Moore said practically the same thing some years before his translation. There is on record a conversation between Roger Babson, the expert statistician, and Charles Steinmetz, the wizard of electricity. Babson asked Steinmetz what line of research would see the greatest development within the next fifty years. As this is the electrical age and we feel that we are only at the beginning of it, we would naturally expect Steinmetz to answer that

day in missions. There is no one but our Lord Jesus Christ in sight for healing the world's deep wound. If China produces another Confucius or a thousand more they will not be able to bring to agitated and distracted China what she needs. For that need is a divine present Saviour. If India shall double her 300,000,000 of gods, or breed another or a score more Gandhis, that will not bring true home rule to India. India needs a home for her soul in a near and realizable God who can be understood in Christ.

Should the Near East breed another Mohammed or a thousand more, the dead hand of Islam will still rest upon the lands she either finds arid or makes arid where she goes. For women and children need a friend who is near and loving—the "Friend We Have In Jesus".

Rise, O my brethren, this is no fire burning up the world's hopes of eternal life, but the rising of the Sun of Righteousness that shall never set until Jesus Christ and His Church possess all the nations according to the Father's promise.

THE CHURCH FOR THE NEW AGE.*

BY REV. R. A. LAPSLEY, JR., D. D.,
Pastor First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, S. C.

We have come to the end of a most delightful and helpful experience. We have renewed old friendships, remembered old vows, revived old customs, and strengthened old faiths. We have been on a mountain-top of privilege; we are now to go down into the plain of everyday living! We have lingered with the Master in the hush and healing of the upper room: we are now to go out into the hubbub and hullabaloo of a

*An address delivered at the One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the founding of Bethel Presbyterian Church, Augusta county, Va.

world that knows Him not! We have been looking backward: may we take one look into the future before we say goodbye? The past has been glorious; but what of the future? The church of the old days was to us as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land; what of the church in the days that are to come? It has been suggested that I speak in this closing service upon this subject, *The Church for the New Age*.

Can any doubt that we live in a new age? In the old days we rode on horseback and in buggies; today we ride in high-powered cars. We used to own a horse who bore the name of Fitzhugh Lee. We called him "Old Lee". He had one indispensable quality in a minister's steed, he knew how to take care of himself. His average speed, under persuasion, was five miles an hour. A trip to Staunton, twelve miles from our home, and back, was an all-day proposition. I drove here yesterday in my automobile from my wife's home in North Carolina. The distance is three hundred miles. Our average speed was more than forty miles an hour. We live in a new age!

Machinery has revolutionized farming and farm life. Your forefathers, who founded this church, broke their land with percheron horses, cut their wheat with a cradle, and cooked their food in the fireplace. You break your land with a tractor, harvest your wheat with a modern binder, and cook your food in a fireless cooker. We live in a new age!

I remember the first phonograph ever brought into this community. We were spending the day in the home of a deacon of this church, whose ashes sleep in yonder churchyard. The machine was brought out from Staunton. It seemed to us a marvelous invention. It played a tubular record, and its prize number was "Turkey in the Straw". Today you tune in your radio and listen while the Boston Symphony plays Hoffman's *Barcarolle*, or the latest Broadway star sings *Carolina Moon*. We live in a new age!

Must not the church change her program and her message to meet the demands of changing conditions? Must not the church shed her old-age clothes, and reshape her time-worn

creeds? Without one word of criticism for those who do not think as I think, I propose to set forth four things that must characterize the church today if she is to meet the challenge of the New Age.

I. *The church that succeeds today will be a church that emphasizes the ethical gospel.*

It will be a church that writes high on her banners, and demands of her members the high moral standards that are taught in the Word of God.

Bishop Francis McConnell has said that "the distinctiveness of Christianity consists in its approach to man and the Universe from the ethical point of view". The world needs today a reaffirmation of and a re-emphasis upon the ethical values of life. One great danger that threatens civilization is the breakdown in moral standards. A behaviouristic psychology has done away with human freedom and responsibility. Men are wondering whether there really is any vital distinction between right and wrong.

Robert W. Service pictures an angel grown tired of heaven. He asks, and is granted permission to visit the earth. While here he is sorely tempted by a woman.

"Then sweetly she mocked his scruples, and softly she him beguiled,
'You who are verily man among men, speak with the tongue of a child!

We've outlived the old standards; they have burst like an overgrown thong,

The ancient, outworn, puritanic traditions of right and wrong!'

And deep in his hell sung the Devil, and this was the strain of his song,

"The ancient, outworn, puritanic traditions of right and wrong!'"

The poet is right! The arch enemy of our souls laughs in his sleeve when men talk in this fashion. And the world needs a church that will hold up without mutilation and without apology the standards of right and wrong found in this Book!

Cecille De Mille rendered a great service when he produced "The Ten Commandments". We need not dwell on the first part of that great photo drama. It deals with the early

history of the Jewish nation—the flight from Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea, the stirring scene in the wilderness. One thing is made perfectly plain, that the Ten Commandments are given by God, that they come *down* from above, not *up* from below.

The second part of the picture portrays a modern home in the twentieth century. The old mother is reading the Ten Commandments out of a well-worn Bible. There are two boys in the home. One follows his mother's teachings and his mother's God. The other says that the Ten Commandments are bunk, that they have no place in the creed of a modern man. And he deliberately starts out to smash them. He breaks every one. He becomes a Sabbath-breaker, disobedient to parents, a thief, a murderer, and an adulterer. But he pays for his sin. And the message that "The Ten Commandments" burn into the heart of all who see the picture is this—that he who smashes the Ten Commandments will be smashed by them. That he who falls upon them will be broken, but he upon whom they fall will be ground into powder.

The world needs a church that will say, "Thus saith the Lord, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before Me! Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy! Thou shalt not kill! Thou shalt not commit adultery! Thou shalt not steal!'" The church that succeeds today will be a church that emphasizes the *ethical gospel*.

II. *The church that succeeds today will be a church that emphasizes the social gospel.*

It will be a church that recognizes the social implications of Christ's teachings and that works for the application of these teachings to the industrial, political and international problems of our day. It will be a church that has a definite program for meeting the social needs of its own community.

The church is criticized today because of her alleged failure to meet her social obligations. It has been said that church members are selfishly concerned with their own salvation, and indifferent to the suffering around them. It is said that they are busy singing, "I am bound for the promised land", while

the world around them is bound for the devil. It is said that they think and talk of a happy land far away, while the community in which they live is anything but happy. It is said that they have forgotten that Jesus laid upon his disciples as one of their primary obligations that they feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick, and comfort the sorrowing.

I doubt if these charges have ever been true. I know that the growth of philanthropic enterprise has been coincident with the growth of the church. I know that worth-while community projects have always found their most ardent supporters in church members.

Bu whatever may have been true in the past, one of the most encouraging signs of the times is the way in which the modern church is recognizing and meeting her social obligations.

Let me speak of my own community because it is the community I know best. There are in Columbia two general hospitals that minister to the sick. There splendid physicians and surgeons work modern miracles on the human body. No needy person is ever turned away from either door. One of these hospitals is a community enterprise; owned, controlled and supported by the county. The other is owned, controlled, and supported by a *Christian Church*. There are two orphanages in Columbia, where fatherless and motherless children are cared for and educated and prepared for life. One of these orphanages is a state institution, the other is owned and controlled and supported by a *Christian Church*. There are three colleges in Columbia for the higher education of young men and women. One is the state university, the other two are owned and controlled and supported by *Christian Churches*.

Let me speak of my own church, because it is the church I know best. There is not an organization of any kind in my church that has not a definite social program. Under the direction of the Secretary of Social Service, every circle in the *Woman's Auxiliary* has its special sphere of social service. One circle has chosen the Tubercular Camp, one the Home for the Blind, one the Children's Clinic, one the State Peniten-

tiary, one the Home for Delinquent Girls, one the County Poor House, etc. The *Men's Club* has adopted a mission chapel across the river. They not only pay a part of the pastor's salary, but they have given for years the money for the annual Sunday-school picnic, the brightest event in the lives of some of the children. The *Christian Endeavor* brings cheer to the Old Soldiers' Home. And last Christmas every class in the *Sunday school* selected some poor family as the object of their activity, and took the greatest delight in seeing that they had a "Merry Christmas".

The spirit that exists in the Church of Christ today is well represented by a poem that was put into my hands by one of the most devoted Christians that I know. It is called "The Bridge-BUILDER":

An old man going a lone highway
Came at the evening cold and gray
To a chasm, vast and deep and wide;
The old man crossed in the twilight dim,
The sullen stream had no fear for him,
But he turned when safe on the other side
And built a bridge to span the tide.

"Old man," said a fellow pilgrim near,
"You are wasting your strength in building here,
Your journey will end with the end of the day;
You never again will pass this way;
You've crossed the chasm deep and wide,
Why build you this bridge in the eventide?"

The builder lifted his old gray head,
"Good friend, in the path I have come," he said,
"There followeth after me today
A youth whose feet must pass this way;
This chasm that has been as naught to me,
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be;
He, too, must cross in the evening dim,
Good friend, I'm building the bridge for him!"

That is what Christians should be today, bridge-builders for the unfortunate, for the underprivileged. And the church

that succeeds in the world today must emphasize the *social gospel*.

III. *The church that succeeds in the world today will be a church that emphasizes the evangelistic gospel.*

It will be a church whose pastor and officers and people have a deep-seated conviction that the human race is lost and ruined in sin, and that Jesus is the only and the almighty Saviour from sin. It will be a church that seeks by every means within its power to find and win for Christ those who are lost from Him.

We do not pretend to say that any given church must tie itself up with any particular form of evangelism, with the so-called "revival meeting", with the so-called "professional evangelist", with the so-called "personal evangelism" method. We do say that the successful church today will be a church that writes into its creed the conviction that the blood of a crucified Saviour is the only hope for sinful men, and that writes into its program a definite plan for leading men to a personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

Sherwood Eddy expressed it exactly when he said at the first meeting of the laymen of the Northern Methodist Church in New York City: "I would not cross the street to bring India a new theology. India already has more theology than she can ever understand. I would not cross the street to give China a new religious creed; China has too many religious creeds as it is. I would not cross the street to give Japan a new code of ethics; Japan has already a far better ethical code than ethical life. But I would go round the world again and again and again to tell India and China and Japan that—

"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."

Queen Victoria was once visiting in one of her cottages. She said to an old woman, one of the humblest of her subjects, "Is there anything the Queen can do for you?" The answer

came, "No, your Majesty." The Queen continued, "But isn't there something you want? I should like to do something for you." And the old woman answered, "Your Majesty, there is not a single thing I want for myself. But there is one thing I wish you would promise me." The Queen said, "What is it? I will do it if I can." And the old woman replied, "Your Majesty, I should like you to promise me to meet me in heaven." And the greatest of England's queens answered softly, "I will, through the mercy and the blood of my Saviour!"

Not far from Columbia there is a historic Presbyterian church known as the "Old Brick Church". It is a famous church in the history of South Carolina Presbyterianism. In the cemetery behind the church there is the grave of a young woman who died in early life. By her own request there is cut into the marble above her tomb this inscription, "*Saved, if saved at all, by the blood of Christ.*"

The only hope of salvation for the pure-hearted country girl was in the blood of Christ. The only hope of salvation for the great queen was in the blood of Christ. The only hope of salvation for the millions in India and China and Japan is in the blood of Christ. And the church that succeeds today will be the church that believes this, and that emphasizes in all her preaching and in all her activities the *evangelistic gospel*.

IV. *The church that succeeds in the world today will be a church that emphasizes the missionary gospel.*

It will be a church that recognizes the world-wide implications of Christianity and the obligation to carry the gospel message into the whole world.

It has been said that "no institution can repudiate its fundamental purpose, its main reason for being, and not suffer thereby". When Christ organized the church He announced its *raison d'être* in these words, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." And He gave the church her marching orders in these words, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

This order has never been rescinded. "To do less is not only disobedient, it is suicidal."

Dr. Egbert Smith in *The Desire of All Nations* paints a marvelous picture of the church that existed in Asia Minor in the early days of Christianity. It was a marvelous church. But where is it today? There is nothing left of it but ancient ruins and a few beggarly Christians, "hardly distinguishable in their ignorance and superstition from the Mohammedans who tolerate them with scorn". What happened to the "Seven Churches of Asia"? The answer is very simple, it is very clear. They neglected the missionary gospel. They failed to send missionaries to the nations that lay in darkness around them. They were self-centered and self-absorbed. They disobeyed Christ's most urgent and most pressing command, and the master Himself removed their candlestick out of its place.*

Dr. Robert F. Horton, chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, has made a broad and exhaustive study of the history of the Christian Church. He finds that the periods of great missionary progress are the periods when the life of the church at home is most Christlike. And he goes on to say, "On the other hand, when the forward impulse has flagged, and the main purpose has been forgotten, a certain paralysis has fallen upon all her efforts; her preaching has become insipid, missing the ring of world conquest; her sacraments have become ritual; her heart has become cold; and her brain, using its agility to excuse herself from her great mission, has wasted its powers in idle and fruitless controversy, or settled into the torpor of the Eastern Church."*

In the Massachusetts Senate in the year 1812, the American Board of Missions applied for articles of incorporation. The granting of the charter was opposed on the ground that this country had no religion to spare. It has been well said, that if the objection had prevailed, by this time our country would have no religion to keep!*

Since these things are true, what must we think of the

*The Desire of All Nations, by Dr. Egbert W. Smith, pp. 68, 72, 74.

distressing and alarming falling off in our gifts as a church to Foreign Missions? Should it not send every true lover of our church to his knees? Can our Southern Presbyterian Church, be she ever so orthodox, survive, if she be less loyal to our Master's dying command in the days that are to come than she has been in the days that are past?

The church that succeeds today must emphasize the *missionary gospel*.

Such, as I conceive it, will be the church that succeeds in the New Age. It will be the church that projects its program and builds its platform on the Ethical Gospel, on the Social Gospel, on the Evangelistic Gospel, on the Missionary Gospel.

Why should there be any conflict between these four? Why should they not fit together as perfectly as the four points of the mariner's compass? What incalculable harm has been done by the over-emphasizing of one to the neglect of others!

Paul said to the elders of the Ephesian Church at Miletus, "I have not shunned to declare unto you *the whole* counsel of God." The world needs today the whole gospel, the gospel in all of its fullness. A mutilated or one-sided gospel will not suffice. The church that overlooks or neglects one phase of this whole gospel will do so at its peril. But the church that takes it stand squarely on this fourfold program will be, in this wonderful New Age in which we live, like a city set on a hill that cannot be hid.